(viii) Creating awareness among public about PDS operations, training Vigilance Committees of intricacies of PDS operations.

(ix) Making fair price shops financially viable entities – allowing them to sell non PDS items etc.

Sanction of new rail line projects in Rajasthan

*263. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has not accepted the proposal of some new rail line projects because of paucity of funds; and

(b) in view of the poor railway network in Rajasthan, whether Government are going to accept the projects *i.e.*, to link Bhiwadi to Delhi-Ahmedabad broad gauge railway line, Jaisalmer to Sanu, Jaisalmer to Barmer and Jaipur to Nathdwara for industrial, mining and tourism development of the State?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. Many new lines surveyed in the past could not be taken up due to heavy throwforward of ongoing projects, unremunerative nature of the line surveyed and constraint of resources.

(b) New line projects are taken up to serve new industries, providing missing links, on strategic reasons and for establishing new growth centres/giving access to remote areas apart from the financial viability of the project. For linking Bhiwadi on Delhi-Ahmedabad route, the State Government of Rajasthan expressed willingness to take up this project under National Capital Region Plan and Assistance to the State for Infrastructure Development for Export and Allied Activities (ASIDE) Scheme. The State Government was requested to bear the cost of the project since it had high negative rate of return and there has not been any positive response. The survey for Jaisalmer-Sanu new line has been taken up as a part of Jaisalmer-Anupgarh *via* Ramgarh. Survey for Jaisalmer-Barmer new line has brought out its negative Rate of Return, which is under examination. No survey for Jaipur-Nathdwara new line has been sanctioned as yet.

Wasteful expenditure due to lack of comprehensive planning

*264. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Comptroller and Auditor General has pulled up Railways for lack of comprehensive planning which resulted in wasteful expenditure on track renewal works on sections identified for gauge conversion and the improvement in track parameters is not commensurate with large number of track renewal works undertaken by Railways;

(b) whether CAG noted that the budgetary control mechanism was inadequate as seen from the savings over some zonal railways and excess expenditure over

other during the same financial year for the last five years both under DRF and special railway safety fund; and

(c) what action his Ministry has taken on the CAG's report?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir. However, Ministry of Railways does not agree with the CAG's views. Track renewals are part of track maintenance activities which are carried out as and when track becomes due for renewal on age-cum-condition basis criteria. The sections sanctioned for gauge conversion do need maintenance works for safe operations of traffic. While there is no doubt that planning was on for gauge conversion, however, due to constraints in capacity and resources for executing works within the country, the time expected to be taken for completion of such projects was long and railway could not afford to endanger safety of traffic and traveling passengers. As a result, works in sections where gauge conversions were expected to have been done, track renewals were also required to be executed. Expenditure incurred, therefore, cannot be termed as wasteful. There is considerable improvement in track parameters, riding quality and overall safety, after completing track renewal works which were over due.

(b) Planning is made at the beginning of the financial year where budget allotment both for Depreciation Reserve Fund as well as under Special Railway Safety Fund are given to zonal railways (as a part of railway budget). Material planning is also done as per the targets given to railways. Execution of works needs many resources such as materials, manpower and machines which are arranged through different sources and contracts. Since there are many variables in their coordination therefore, there may be some shortfalls on some of the railways, however, overall targets on IR have mostly been achieved. Funds allotted are fully utilized. The budgetary control therefore, is adequate.

(c) CAG is being suitably apprised.

Non-payment of arrears by sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh

†*265. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh under public sector, cooperative sector and private sector owe an amount of rupees 13445.41 lakhs, 9313.77 lakhs and 26413.78 lakhs respectively for the price of sugarcane for the season 2006-07;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the sugar mills under private sector in Uttar Pradesh owe an amount of rupees 8455.02 lakhs for the price of sugarcane for the 2004-05 season and the seasons prior thereto;

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to expedite the payment to farmers; and

(d) by when the farmers would get the full payment?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.